Equality of Opportunity and Freedom from Discrimination

MHR Connections

Published by the Manitoba Human Rights Commission

Volume 15 Number 7-8 Summer 2015

Winnipeg's Mayor Launches National Summit To Encourage Racial Inclusion

The Mayor's National Summit on Racial Inclusion will be held September 17 – 18 in Winnipeg. The ONE Summit is hosted by a partnership led by the City of Winnipeg and the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR).

The focus of the ONE Summit is to begin the process of building an extensive network of leaders and thinkers dedicated to generating "ideas of inclusion" that can ultimately be embraced by individuals and organizations across the country.

"To encourage profound change, the ONE Summit has got to be more than a discussion group," said Winnipeg Mayor, Brian Bowman. "It has got to identify initiatives that are already working and develop new and sharable ideas to encourage respect and embrace inclusivity across our nation."

The ONE Summit will include a panel discussion that will be no cost to the public on Thursday, September 17th, featuring keynote speaker, Scotia Bank Giller Prize winning author Joseph Boyden. A series of workshops will follow on Friday, September 18th that includes recognizing racism, promoting healthy race relations, and moving forward toward inclusion and reconciliation. Pre-registration for Thursday's events is required to attend and costs to register for Friday's workshops are $50, $25 for students.

continued on page 2

THE MANITOBA HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION
LA COMMISSION DES DROITS DE LA PERSONNE DU MANITOBA

www.manitobahumanrights.ca

The Rights Connection

By Azim Jiwa - Executive Director

The Evolution of Human Rights

The Magna Carta, which is on display at the Canadian Museum of Human Rights, was the product of one of the most turbulent periods in English history. It embodied key principles that many believe created the foundation for modern democracy and human rights. Its principles include that nobody is above the law of the land; Habeas Corpus (freedom from unlawful detention without evidence); trial by jury; and small steps in introducing women's rights (a widow could not be forced to marry and give up her property.)

Although this document only applied to certain classes of people, it is still an important reminder that human rights and democracy have not always been in place. Many before us have fought for the protections that are in place today. Like many of the exhibits that call the Museum home, The Magna Carta gives us an opportunity to reflect upon human rights advances to date and the work that is left to be done.

Human rights protections in Manitoba are enshrined in the *The Human Rights Code* (Manitoba). *The Code* recognizes the individual worth and dignity of every member of the human family.

Around the world people are still struggling to create a society that recognizes the rights that are protected in Manitoba and Canada. For example, it was only in June 2015 when the American Supreme Court legalized same sex marriage – a human rights achievement that Canada reached in 2005.

In Manitoba and across Canada, work is still being done to advance human rights. Human rights commissions, like ours, continue to investigate and, where there is evidence to support discrimination, advance complaints. This frequently results in systemic changes and education that advance the rights of others who might similarly be affected. Advances also occur by lobbying to increase awareness and increase accessibility.

Human rights have evolved over time and they will continue to evolve. It is also important to remember that with the recognition and protection of human rights come the responsibility of the individual to ensure that they are not encroaching on the rights of others.

Pre-Investigation Mediation Continues To Successfully Resolve Complaints

Pre-Investigation Mediation involves a Manitoba Human Rights Commission Mediator contacting both parties to see if they would be willing to voluntarily participate in mediation to attempt to resolve the matter. During this process there is no assessment or investigation into the merits of the complaint. In 2014, 48 matters were successfully resolved using this process.

Recently an agreement was reached between a Complainant and her former employer. She alleged that the Respondent discriminated against her on the basis of her sex (female/pregnant) and/or family status (mother of a young child). The Respondent told her that she was not able to return to her position at the end of her maternity leave and opted to keep the worker who replaced her while she was away. The Respondent was not required to provide a reply.

The parties entered into an agreement which included the Respondent providing the Complainant with $10,000 for general damages, $28,000 for lost wages, an apology letter and reference letter; and the owner agreed to attend two human rights workshops. The Complainant agreed to sign an all inclusive release which included a confidentiality clause.

Creating New Connections

The MHRC began publishing Bulletins 16 years ago with a publication called Human Rights from Manitoba, which evolved into The Connections Bulletin as it exists today. We're excited to announce that The Connections Bulletin will be getting a new, updated look!

We anticipate the revamped Connections Bulletin will be released at the end of September.

Please send us your ideas to hrc@gov.mb.ca

ONE Summit continued from page 1

"Racism is an all-too prevalent problem in our society, and this summit will bring advocates, researchers and decision makers together around the table to work on real solutions that promote social inclusion and combat intolerance," said the Honourable James Allum, Minister of Education and Advanced Learning.

"We're more than excited by the calibre and commitment of individuals who have agreed to help us bring our first ONE Summit to life," said Mayor Bowman. "With just 31 days remaining in our countdown, I encourage Manitobans and Canadians wishing to attend to register quickly at 1winnipeg.ca."

Register Today for Manitoba Human Rights Commission Employment Seminars

The Manitoba Human Rights Commission is pleased to announce its 2015 – 2016 Employment Seminar schedule. Seminars offered include a half-day basic introduction to *The Code* as it relates to employment, as well as half-day seminars that focus on harassment, reasonable accommodation and mental health accommodations. Seminars are an excellent opportunity for human resource professionals, managers, owners or supervisors to understand their obligations under *The Code*.

All sessions offered will be facilitated by Commission employees, who will provide relevant examples of the issues discussed.

Dates and details of the Commission's 2015 – 2016 Employment Seminar schedule can be found online at http://www.manitobahumanrights.ca/workshops.html

For more information about on-site seminars, please contact Pam Roberts at 204-726-6262 or pam.roberts@gov.mb.ca

"Great, engaging facilitators. Looking forward to my next seminar." **- Business of Human Rights**

"Excellent workshop. Great facilitators. I would recommend it to others" **- Harassment in the Workplace**

"Great presentation and use of examples/stories. The time flew by." **- Accommodation in the Workplace**